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Sermon

THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REUNION

of the

DOOLITTLE FAMILY IN AMERICA,

SOUTH BEND, IND., Sept. 7th & 8th, 1935.

Historical-Religious-Address,

J. Seymour Doolittle, Chaplain.

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Dear Cousins and Friends:

There are many things I would like to say in reference to the Doolittle Family, but time will not permit.

This is not specifically a historical address, but references to the Doolittles have been taken from our History, "The Doolittle Family in America". Credit is given to Dr. Wm. F. Doolittle for facts.

I have endeavored to boil down and condense so that my words are suggestions rather than details, but I trust they will create a greater interest in our family--past, present and future.

I am not attempting a sermon, but rather a familiar talk. In order that we may have a centralizing thought, I have chosen as a theme "A Good Name".

Many years ago there w s a very wise man who had great wisdom, riches and honor. A great King, ruler over a mighty people, an architect, builder, had many wives and children with vast and varied experiences, sin and trouble, gathered many precepts, promises and proverbs. He was author of at least two books. He has recorded wise sayings for our consideration. Cne of these is recorded in PRCV. 22, 1 reads: "A GCCD NAME IS RATHER TC BE CHCSEN THAN GREAT RICHES, AND LCVING FAVCR RATHER THAN SILVER AND GCLD". Not that we should despise wealth in any form for if rightly used, riches become stepping stones to a good name. But in choosing have for the objective, A GCCD NAME AND LCVING FAVCR.

The names Bill, Tom, Joe, Jack, Sue, Lil, Helen, and Jennie are not so very important, they are like handles by which we know the personality. Names are made of little characters which we call letters, but beyond the little letter or mark is the real name A CHARACTER made in the likeness of God with ability to think, talk, act, in body, soul and spirit.

Rec'd Oct 4-1978

It depends upon us individually as to whether we shall defile, degrade, or despoil this character, or build it by our words and deeds, into a noble character that is worthy of a GOOD NAME.

Briefly I am calling your attention to some characteristics of human nature which qualify for a good name.

First I mention PIONEER LEADERS. In every age there have been men and women of vison, catching sight of achievements for advancement in every department of life. Sensing problems, hard work, trials and disappointments, discouragement and defeat, but perseverin to triumphant victory. Call it what you will instinct, urge, impulse, inspiration, men and women have seen the vision and dared to go, to act, to win. Men like Abraham the Patriarch, Moses the Law Giver, David the Musician Shepherd, Isiah the Prophet, Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles, Columbus the Discoverer. Leaders like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln; men like David Livingstone who went into darkest Africa to open the way for civilization, to be followed later by Sweitzer who established schools, hospitals and chrsitianity. Men like Greenfiled going into frozen Labrador with Christianity, schools and hospitals. A Perry, Amundsen and Byrd seeking new wonders in the Arctics. A Susan B. Anthony, a Frances Willard and many others--all men and women of vision, of courage, faith and determination. These are leaders on the onward march of humanity to better conditions.

Going back into history about 1000 years, we find in Normandy, a family name with various spellings but evidently of noble character. While tracing their migration through France, England, and possibly into Ireland, and combining the influence of these nations (The polish and courtesy of the French, the stability, determination and learning of the English with some Irish wit and Norman stamina) we find, in the year 1640, a family, man and wife with the man's brother, migrating to America. ABRAHAM DOOLITTLE by name.

He was a mighty man of vision, a great leader of a great family destined to have a powerful influence in the development of America. Whenever we think and talk about our family relations, we include with the fathers--the mothers. It is a firmly established fact that the influence of the Mother, prenatal and subsequently in the growth, training and development of the children, the loyal devotion through health and sickness, in good and ill report, in prosperity and adversity, at home or for the wandering child, the heroic, self-sacrificing love of the Mother is a powerful factor in developing good names. So let us be ever mindful of Joan Allen and Abigail Moss, the wives of Abraham Doolittle and mothers of his children. Blessed be the mothers of yesterday, today and forever, who train their children in ways of righteous character, worthy of a Good Name.

After stopping for a short time in Boston, Abraham Doolittle with his family went forward into the new county of Connecticut, absorbing many of the Puritan characteristics and much of their nobility of character. He made history for himself and numerous posterity. When I read of his activities, I quote from Our History, "During the 20 years from the incorporation of Wallingford, until his death, he was appointed to almost every position of responsibility within the gift of his fellow townsmen,"--his wonderful abilities, his vigorous life, I am amazed, overcome with the stupendous splendid far reaching accomplishments and influences of our Puritan ancesters. His Spirit of loyal devotion to duties of trust and responsibilities in various activities of honor. Oh, there are so many important and valuable characteristics it is not surprising that his name is written in large letters upon the pages of history, that are a glowing tribute to a good name of Puritan nobility, which I trust we appreciate.

I wonder if our illustrious ancestor could today catch a vision of all the wonderful works of his descendents through the many years. I wonder as I am thinking, I am quite sure his spirit would be thrilled and lifted up into the high heavens and he would exclaim: "GREAT AND MARVELOUS ARE THY WORKS LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, IN WISDOM HAST THOU MADE THEM ALL". The crowning work of our God was making man and woman, characters in his own image and likeness. You and I, with possibilities of growth, opportunities for service, responsibilities for the duties of life, influence in building of characters, thank God for the nobility of our Puritan Ancestors. It is for us to present to the world that nobility of character which is worthy of Good Names.

ABRAHAM DOOLITTLE was a good character whose Puritan life blood has come down to us as a blessed heritage. Other leaders there have been and continue to be, who aredescendants of Abraham of whom we are justly proud. In every generation, in every department of life, there have been Doolittles as leaders who have written their records upon the pages of history in the onward march of humanity. Their virtuous Godly lives have been as bright stars illuminating the way of life--shedding their beneficent rays upon us today. Here we are pioneer leaders. So far as I know, we are the only family having a national or International organization. Do we catch a vision of our wonderful, valuable heritage of Puritan life? Do we realize the responsibilities, duties and privileges of preserving, developing and perpetuating the nobility of characters that are good names.

Briefly I refer to some other characteristics of human nature that qualify for a good CHARACTER.

OBEDIENCE One of the fundamental principles of a successful life is to obey the better impulses of life, to go, to do, to achieve, to win. These are all desirable for a GOOD NAME.

FAITH — In the possibilities of life with its opportunities for growth and service into nobility of character, faith in the divine spark, in humanity, and above all faith in God who is sufficient for all the needs of his creatures. Faithful unto death wins the crown.

COURAGE — Oh how fearful we are at times when the battles of life are fierce and defeat and disaster seem to overwhelm us. Listen to our God: "FEAR NOT FOR THOU ART MINE, WHEN THOU PASSETH THROUGH THE WATERS, I WILL BE WITH THEE AND THROUGH THE RIVERS THEY SHALL NOT OVERFLOW, WHEN THOU WALKEST THROUGH THE FIRE THOU SHALL NOT BE BURNED NEITHER SHALL THE FLAME KINDLE UPON THEE".

HOPE — We hope for better conditions, better health and happiness. In all the busy affairs of life everywhere, all the time. Hope springs "ETERNAL IN THE HUMAN BREAST". The Book says: "HOPE IS AN ANCHOR TO THE SOUL BOTH SURE AND STEADFAST". In anxious days of tumult and turmoil through which our ancestors passed, and today, Hope holds the life steady for the character is anchored to the Rock of Ages.

SYMPATHY — To be glad with those who rejoice and weep in sympathy with those who are in sorrow is Christ-like. "IT IS BETTER TO GO TO THE HOUSE OF MOURNING THAN THE HOUSE OF FEASTING FOR BY THE SADNESS OF THE COUNTENANCE THE HEART IS MADE BETTER".

SELF SACRIFICE — Self sacrifice in service to others is a desirable quality in good character. And the King shall say: "COME--FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YE GAVE ME MEAT, I WAS THIRSTY AND YE GAVE ME DRINK, A STRANGER AND YE TOOK ME IN, NAKED AND YE CLOTHED ME, IN PRISON AND YE VISITED ME". Matt. 25,34-37.

MODESTY — The virtue likened unto meekness, "THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH" in honor preferring others.

PRAYER — Talking with our heavenly Father, any where, any time, in any experience of life, is one of the blessings of a Good Character.

LOVE — The supreme gift of a noble character, love to God, to home, to parent, to children, to neighbors and the great test, love to enemies. Faith, Hope, Love, the greatest is Love.

These qualifications for a GOOD NAME that I have mentioned are some of the characteristics of the Doolittle family. To be sure there are a great many good characters in other homes and families not of the tribe of Doolittle in which richly dwell good names and loving favor.

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So far we know the great majority of the Doolittles have manifested in their lives some of the attributes of GOOD CHARACTER.

It would be strange indeed if some individuals of so large a family have not departed from the straight and narrow way. Some of these Doolittles "GOOD NAMES" are written upon the pages of history as greatly contributing to the advancement of humanity. Their names are an honor to our Puritan ancestors and Glory of God.

From Abraham Doolittle through the long list of honorable mention to the present time there have been blessings innumerable. Today we are enjoying those blessings and privileges for which they fought and suffered and won triumphant victories to their honor and the Glory of God. To most of us our names are not written upon the pages of history.

Most of us are just workers on the farm, in the shop, in the school or office, in business or professions, in the household duties, doing with our might what our hands find to do, helping others to forge ahead as honorable mention of Good Character.

What more shall I say, time would fail me to tell of the goodly number of Miniesters of whom our family is prominently noted, of Educators, Physicians, Statemen, Lawyers, Judges, Captains, Generals, Artists, Authors, Aviators, Poets and Fathers and Mothers who have wrought mighty for sons and daughters, Missionaries, Inventors, Scientists, Astronomers, Historians, tillers of the soil in various occupations, Pioneer workers in silver and gold, brass, copper and steel. Builders of railroads, builders of churches, builders of characters, Philanthropists, Bankers and Financiers. Perhaps many others and just us common folk, all true, earnest, faithful, loyal helpers in the onward and upward lifting of the light which shines in the darkness pointing the way to better things and worthy of a GOOD NAME.

We have been thinking mainly of those who have preceded us and gone to their final reward. I trust I may be pardoned if I speak very briefly of those are are now busy in the duties of this strenuous life, of worldly tumult and turmoil in which we are now living. Some of us are looking toward the setting sun with its lengthening shadows, having passed the 70 or 80 span of life or perhaps nearing the four score and ten.

I love to watch the setting sun going down behind the horizon and contemplating in rapture the radiant beauty as it reflects upon the sky and fleecy clouds above and away to the north and the south. So for us when we are lost to mortal sight may there be a beneficient influence reflected from the going of our lives which thrills and inspires others to reach out for good names.

To those who are now in the prime of life, bearing the burden of this troubled world, be earnest, be faithful, in bearing aloft the banner of GOOD CHARACTERS.

To those who are boys and girls in school, you are enjoying golden days for an education and you are building now for GOOD NAMES. The good things you learn and keep in store are yours. Riches take wings and fly away, but Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, understanding and knowledge.

I trust all of us will be earnest, serious, faithful in every activity of life, assuming its duties and responsibilities with cheerfulness, doing with our might what our hands find to do, doing all to the Glory of God. Undaunted and unafraid with the viscissitudes of life, when we receive the summons COME HOME-- May we receive the welcome. WELL DONE.

There is a Name above every Name.
Jesus the Christ the Son of God.
The Savior of every one that believeth,
The Friend that sticketh closer than a brother,
The Way, the Truth, the Life, our Example,
The Light of the world who is the light by which we walk. The Rock of Ages. The sure foundation upon which to build good names that endure for time and eternity.

I close with a short poem which I quote:

"Tis the human touch in this world that counts,
The touch of your hand and mine,
Which means far more to the fainting heart,
Than shelter and bread and wine.

For the shelter is gone when the night is o'er,
And bread and wine lasts only a day,
But the touch of the hand and the tone of the voice,
Sing on and on in the soul alway."

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